



SCOPING DOCUMENT

HIGH BRIDGE GENERATING PLANT REPOWERING

Docket No. 05-91-PPS-XCEL ENERGY HIGH BRIDGE

Prepared by the Staff of the

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
Room 300
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This scoping document is intended to advise the public of the scoping process and the process for the preparation of the Environmental Review document. The scoping decision will identify for the public the issues and alternatives that the EQB Chair has determined are appropriate for inclusion in the environmental review document. The scoping decision will also identify certain issues that will not be included in the environmental review document.

On January 31, 2005, Xcel Energy submitted to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB) a site permit application regarding a proposal to construct and operate a natural gas-fuel, combined-cycle electric generating facility capable of producing 480 to 665 megawatts (MW).

This project is part of Xcel Energy's Metropolitan Emission Reduction Proposal, which was reviewed and approved by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in Docket E002/M-02-633. The High Bridge proposal consists of replacing the existing 270 MW coal fueled plant (i.e., the High Bridge Plant) with a new, natural gas-fired, combined cycle plant. The replacement of the High Bridge Plant is exempt from the Certificate of Need requirements of Minnesota Statutes § 216B.243.

In accordance with the Power Plant Siting Act, (Minn. Stat. §§ 116C.51 to 116C.69), a site permit is required before a large electric power generating plant (LEPGP) like that proposed in this project can be constructed. The EQB is required to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) as part of its consideration of the request for a site permit. The EA evaluates the site specific issues. The EQB has promulgated rules for the administration of the site permitting process. Those rules are found in Minn. Rules chapter 4400. The application will be reviewed pursuant to the Alternative Permitting Review process procedures in Minnesota Rules, part 4400.2000-2950.

On February 4, 2005, the EQB Chair accepted the application as substantially complete and notified the applicant in writing of the decision. A copy of the Site Permit Application can be viewed on the EQB website:

<http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=15966>

EQB staff expects this project to be placed on the EQB's agenda for a decision in August 2005.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The High Bridge Repowering Project will consist of replacing the coal-fired plant located near downtown St. Paul on the Mississippi River with a natural gas-fired, combined cycle system, consisting of two combustion turbines, corresponding heat recovery steam generators, and a new steam turbine generator.

The new facility will provide 480-665 MW of generating capacity (nominal range depending on operating conditions), a substantial increase of capacity from the existing coal-fired plant. The facility's generating units will be installed in a new building located at the southwest corner of the existing site. No expansion of the existing plant site will be required. Coal-fired generation would be eliminated entirely at the site.

The High Bridge Generating Plant address is 501 Shepard Road, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102. The property is located along the Mississippi River, just southwest of the High Bridge in Township 28N, Range 23W, Sections 1 and 12 in Ramsey County.

To supply natural gas to the facility, a new, high pressure pipeline will need to be constructed connecting the plant to an existing Northern Natural Gas Company (NNG) interstate pipeline. The new pipeline will originate at the Cedar Town Border Station in Burnsville, approximately 10 miles southwest of the new plant. The natural gas pipeline will be permitted through separate process.

In order to accommodate the proposal, Xcel Energy will need to modify several existing on-site structures. The High Bridge Substation and several transmission line structures will need to be relocated on the site. All of the relocated lines will remain at the same voltage, but will be reconducted.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW DOCUMENT

As discussed in Section 1.0 the EQB will be preparing an EA document as part of its responsibilities under the environmental review procedures as provided in Minnesota Rules, part 4400.2750. The environmental review document must include the following:

- A. A general description of the proposed project;
- B. A list of any alternative sites or routes that are addressed;
- C. A discussion of the potential impacts of the proposed project and each alternative site or route on the human and natural environment;
- D. A discussion of mitigative measures that could reasonably be implemented to eliminate or minimize any adverse impacts identified for the proposed project and each alternative;
- E. An analysis of the feasibility of each alternative site or route considered;
- F. A list of permits required for the project; and
- G. A discussion of other matters identified in the scoping process.

4.0 EA SCOPING PROCESS

The purpose of the scoping process is to provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the development of the scope of the EA by holding a public meeting and soliciting public comment.

On Thursday, March 3, 2005, the EQB will hold a public information meeting in room 302 of the Centennial Office Building (COB) in the State Capital Complex. The COB is located at 658 Cedar Street in St. Paul, Minnesota. The meeting will be held at 3:00 pm and at 7:00 pm. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to the public about the proposed project, to answer questions, and to allow the public an opportunity to suggest alternatives and impacts that should be considered during preparation of the environmental review document. Written comments may also be submitted; written comments must be submitted no later than March 21, 2005.

Written comments should be mailed to Bill Storm, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, 658 Cedar Street, Room 300, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155.

A scoping decision will be made by the EQB Chair. That decision will be made shortly after the close of the comment period. Persons who want to be advised of the Chair's scoping decision can register their names with the EQB at the public meeting, on the EQB website or contact Bill Storm at (651) 296-9535. The final scoping decision will also be posted on the EQB website.

5.0 DRAFT SCOPE FOR COMPLETION OF EA

The following is a draft outline of the EA scope and contains those areas to be addressed within the EA document.

1.0 OVERVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Description

2.1.1 Description of Power Generating Equipment and Processes

2.1.2 Air Emission Control Equipment

2.1.3 Water Use

2.1.4 Wastewater

2.1.5 Solid and Hazardous Waste Generation

2.1.6 Fuel Supply

2.1.7 Electrical Interconnection

2.2 Purpose

2.3 Sources of Information

3.0 Regulatory Framework

3.1 Certificate of Need

3.2 Site Permit Requirement

3.2.1 Environmental Assessment

3.2.2 Public Hearing

3.3 Other Permits

3.4 Issues Outside EQB Authority

4.0 ALTERNATIVE SITES

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

6.0 HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

6.1 Air Quality

Potential to Emit

Criteria Pollutants

Air Emissions Risk Analysis

6.2 Biological Resources

Flora

Fauna

Rare and Unique Natural Resources

- 6.3 Culture, Archeological and Historic Resources
- 6.4 Geology and Soils
- 6.5 Health and Safety
- 6.6 Land Use
 - Zoning
 - Displacement
 - Recreational Areas
- 6.7 Noise
- 6.8 Socioeconomics
- 6.9 Transportation
- 6.10 Visual Impacts and Aesthetics
- 6.11 Water Resources
 - Surface Water
 - Groundwater
 - Wetlands
- 6.12 Waste Management and Disposal
 - Wastewater
 - Solid Waste
 - Hazardous Waste

7.0 Summary of Mitigative Measures

8.0 Feasibility

6.0 SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION OF EA

The Environmental Assessment on the LEPGP will be completed by May 5, 2005.

Upon completion of the EA, the EQB will notify those persons who have asked to be notified of the completion. In addition, the EQB will publish notice of the availability of the EA in the EQB Monitor (the bi-weekly newsletter of the agency). The EA will be made available for review and will be posted on the EQB webpage. The EQB will hold a public hearing in St. Paul to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions and to comment on the Site Permit application. The public will also have a period of time (at least 10 days) after the meeting to submit written comments.

Comments on the EA shall become part of the record in the proceeding, but the Board shall not be required to revise or supplement the EA document.